a skirmish; much more decisive than that at Shebreket, to be sure, and somewhat more bloody, but only a skirmish. Both were represented to the Directory as great battles, the five Mamelukes killed in the first being magnified to three hundred. The camp at Embabeh furnished rich spoils to the victorious leaders, but the fabled wealth of Cairo, destined for the soldiery, proved to be like apples of Sodom. The army had been angry and disheartened; deprived of its accustomed booty, it became sullen and mutinous. There was no news from home. Oriental apathy long defied even Bonaparte's administrative powers. Egypt was subdued, but the situation of the general and of his troops was apparently desperate. Long afterwards the Emperor said to Gourgaud that, horrible as was the confession, he believed it fortunate that the French fleet was destroyed at Aboukir, "otherwise the army would have reem-barked." If he had commanded Mamelukes, he would have been master of the East, he added.

Nothing daunted by what would have broken a feebler spirit, the • disillusioned conqueror turned to the conquest of another world. Africa had failed him, but Asia was near, and a revolution might be effected there. The maltreatment of French merchants in Syria had been one of the Directory's original grounds of complaint; it must serve another turn, and if the Sultan were sufficiently humbled, he might be compelled to an alliance against the menacing league of Russia and Austria. The need for carrying out this plan was further confirmed by the awful news which soon came from Alexandria. Nelson, having scoured in vain the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, had returned first to Sicily, then to Greece, and finally to Egypt. Bonaparte had left instructions for Admiral Brueys to work the fleet into the old port of the Ptole-